

# NJCFS NEWSLETTER

Office of Management and Budget  
Accounting Bureau

May 2000

Issue # 30

## **DIRECT PURCHASE AUTHORITY THRESHOLD INCREASE** \*

The direct purchase authority threshold is the dollar limit set for “non-Purchase Bureau Encumbrances and Expenditures” delegated to agencies by the Purchase Bureau. This limit has now been raised from \$11,000 to \$25,000. The change was formalized with the issuance of Revised Procurement Circular – Direct Purchase Authorization No. 00-13-DPP, effective April 17, 2000.

The increased limit will provide agencies with greater authority to encumber and pay transactions that do not have Purchase Bureau involvement by processing them in NJCFS rather than in MACS-E. These transactions will continue to be subject to the procedures established in NJCFS.

\* See addendum for clarification of article.

## **NJCFS DISASTER RECOVERY**

OMB Accounting Bureau staff will be participating in NJCFS disaster Recovery Testing during May 2000. In disaster recovery testing, data processing and core group users test the plan developed to address problems that may be associated with maintaining data processing services after natural or man-made disasters.

For NJCFS disaster recovery testing, online transactions will be entered via remote link to a back-up version of NJCFS located at a distant SunGard data processing facility. Since this test version of NJCFS is fully functional, all of the normal daily features of batch processing in the NJCFS will be simulated.

The NJCFS production system will not be affected in any way by this testing. All State business processes and functions related to NJCFS will occur as usual during the disaster recovery testing.

## **ACH TRAVEL PAYMENTS**

State employees who have elected to receive travel payments in the form of Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) direct deposits must notify the Accounting Bureau of any changes in their bank accounts. Failure to update banking information for ACH payments may result in the inability of the system to transmit payments properly. To ensure uninterrupted operation of the ACH feature, these changes should be reported to Richard Mutek at (609)-292-4786.

## **EZ PASS TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT**

Employees who travel on State business and who use the EZ Pass payment mechanism on toll roads and bridges should use the following procedure when requesting reimbursement for those charges. The employee's travel expense report should indicate the actual charged amounts for the tolls incurred and be supported by a copy of the monthly EZ Pass statement with those charges and dates circled. Agencies should accept this as they would any toll charge supported by a receipt when reviewing expense reports.

## **EVENT TABLE ADDITIONS**

An important initial step in the processing of travel documents is the establishment of the event code on the Event Table (EVNT.)

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Request forms to establish new event codes may be faxed to the attention of Cheryl Schwartz, OMB Accounting Bureau, at (609)-984-5210. Agencies should first scan the EVNT to determine whether the event has already been added. If a code has already been established on the table for a specific travel event, each of the agencies participating in the event must use that code.

Event code requests are accorded high priority and are generally processed by Accounting Bureau staff within two hours of receipt. Agencies should refrain from calling to determine when the request will be processed; instead, revisit the EVNT to see when the code is established. It is also requested that agencies not re-fax these requests since this duplication in paperwork causes processing delays at the Accounting Bureau. Due to the need for documentation of requests, and in view of the expeditious handling that the fax requests receive, agencies should not request additions to the Event Table by telephone.

## **ACCOUNTING PERIODS – FY 2001**

A schedule listing start and end dates for each accounting period in Fiscal Year 2001 is attached at the end of this newsletter. Accounting periods end at the close of business on the fifth working day of the next month. The exception is the twelfth accounting period, which encompasses the entire period of June 1 through July 31 each year.

## **YEAR-END GUIDELINES**

Circular Letter 00-11-OMB "Year-end Guidelines Fiscal Year 2000" was issued on

May 1, 2000. This circular letter contains cut-off dates, instructions and information of importance to user agencies concerning the NJCFS year-end closing.

Cut-off dates for transactions that may require the approval of OMB or the Office of Legislative Services (OLS) include:

<b><u>TRANS CODE</u></b>	<b><u>CUT-OFF DATE</u></b>
TA (OLS Approval)	July 3, 2000
AP	July 14, 2000
RB	July 14, 2000
TA	July 14, 2000

## **WASHINGTON TRAVEL**

The Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor has issued updated guidelines regarding travel to the Washington, DC metropolitan area by State employees. The memorandum states that all travel to the Washington area, (including meetings, conferences, training, etc.) must receive the prior approval of the Governor's Office. Requests should be submitted to the Governor's Office at least five business days prior to the travel date.

The daily allowance for hotel costs in Washington DC and the surrounding area is currently set at \$118.00 per night before tax. This standard should be adhered to, but may be exceeded in exceptional cases. In no case may the pre-tax hotel cost exceed \$150.00. Requests, along with supporting documentation, should be faxed to Roz Sherman, Secretary to the Deputy Chief of Staff - (609)-777-0944. Questions regarding Washington travel should be directed to Roz at (609)-777-2215.

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Any Washington travel that involves meetings with federal or elected officials must first be approved by New Jersey's Washington Office. Any requests to testify in Washington must also be cleared by contacting the State's Washington Office at (202)-638-0631 or (609)-292-0850.

## **INTEGRATED FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUITE (IFAAS)**

In reviewing the status of the aging applications within the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Personnel, it was clear that various existing applications including the 30 year old Payroll application and the Personnel Management Information System could not support the future needs of the State of New Jersey. With the increased popularity and proliferation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, the desire for new and up-to-date technologies, and the need for more efficient integration of applications, the decision was made to examine the possibilities of acquiring an integrated suite of software that could form the core application solution for its future business needs. The State was looking to acquire an integrated software suite that would be fully integrated with "Web Enabled" functionality. The Integrated Financial and Administration Suite (IFAAS) Project was established to achieve these goals.

Toward this end, in November 1998, the Oracle Corporation was engaged to gather high-level requirements. The intent of the Oracle effort was to identify the State's critical business processes. Once high-level requirements were available, they could be matched against the functionality offered by

commercial off-the-shelf software (COTS). In addition, through this matching evaluation activity, the State would be able to examine business process re-engineering opportunities. An extensive series of individual and group interviews with central and non-central agency representatives, agency focus sessions and agency review sessions were held to gather, refine and validate the high-level requirements.

A Project Core Group, composed of knowledgeable users, was formed to coordinate the various business functional areas to be addressed by the Project and to develop the Request for Proposal (RFP) document.

The application areas that have been addressed by this study include General Ledger, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Cash Management, Payroll, Planning and Budgeting, Appropriation Accounting, Human Resources, Training Administration, Time and Attendance, Purchasing, E-Commerce, Contract Management, Grants Management and Project Accounting, Fixed Assets, and Inventory. The suite would also include integrated ad-hoc and reporting tools to facilitate end-user analysis and computing.

In early June 1999, GartnerConsulting was engaged to advise and assist the State in the RFP process for selecting both a software suite and an implementation/integration vendor. GartnerConsulting was experienced in working with other organizations in selecting products of this nature by managing organizational expectations, helping to define the scope, and developing evaluation models.

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The Office of Information Technology (OIT) has provided information regarding the requirements for the network infrastructure and technical architecture so that the RFP can define the expected technical environment in the 18-24 month future time frame. This is essential to determine if New Jersey could support a “*Web Enabled*” software suite.

The draft of the RFP was presented to the State’s agencies on April 13, 2000. Responses are in the process of being evaluated and, where appropriate, will be incorporated into the final document.

Currently, the Project continues to move forward on a number of different fronts. Driving all efforts is the intent to submit the RFP for competitive bid by the middle or end of June 2000 and to complete preparations for the extensive bid evaluation process that will commence shortly thereafter. GartnerConsulting continues to assist the Project Team by advising and reviewing. The Project Team, through the assignment of weights and evaluation criteria, will further customize the draft evaluation model.

In addition to the ongoing RFP development efforts, there are extensive project planning activities in progress. Other activities include: the researching of Change Management methodologies; a planned visit to the State of Georgia to take advantage of the knowledge gained from their ERP success; the Project Web Page is being redesigned and its use modified to step-up our intra-state communication abilities; and training in relational database and logical data modeling is being scheduled for members of the Project Team. Upon

contract award, attention will shift to project management and the ability to monitor, control, and adapt to evolving events.

The IFAAS Project Management Team encourages and welcomes agency involvement and input throughout the life cycle of the Project. Agency Coordinators have been designated by each agency to facilitate ongoing communication and participation with the Project.

Questions regarding this article or the IFAAS Project in general can be directed to Richard T. Stewart, Project User Coordinator, by telephone at 609.633.7651 or by email at: [stewart\\_r@tre.state.nj.us](mailto:stewart_r@tre.state.nj.us).

## Q&A

**Q.** What is the time frame in which travel advances must be settled?

**A.** Travel advances must be settled within 30 days of the trip end date in accordance with OMB policy. Employees must settle advances by submitting actual expense information, even when there are no additional amounts due to the employee. It should be emphasized to employees that failure to process a settlement at the end of a travel event in which an advance has been issued results in an accounting record indicating that the full amount of the advance is still due from the employee. It is the responsibility of each fiscal officer to make certain that the 30-day settlement policy is strictly complied with.

**Q.** When processing an Expenditure Modification (EM) transaction, which involves a travel object code, a message appears indicating that an override is

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required. How should I proceed in these situations?

A. When the message "NJAVO – Travel Object Referenced" appears on an EM transaction, the user must contact OMB to have the override applied. A screen print and any explanatory material should be faxed to Michael Gallagher at (609)-984-5210. The edit that generates the error message is designed to ensure that outstanding travel advances are not closed improperly by the EM. Once it is determined that the transaction is correct, the override is applied and the transaction is processed by OMB. Questions regarding the need for travel overrides on EM transactions should be directed to Mike at 609-984-5206.

Agencies should remember that all EM's that cross fiscal years also require the application of an override by OMB and should be addressed to Bill Maughan at fax number (609)-984-5210. Any questions concerning these transactions can be directed to Bill by phone at (609)-292-5004.

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## NJCFS ACCOUNTING PERIODS FY 2001

	JUL-00	AUG-00	SEP-00	OCT-00	NOV-00	DEC-00	JAN-01	FEB-01	MAR-01	APR-01	MAY-01	JUN-01	JUL-01
PERIOD 01-01	7/1/00 - 8/7/00	8/1/00 - 9/8/00	9/1/00 - 10/6/00	10/1/00 - 11/8/00	11/1/00 - 12/7/00	12/1/00 - 1/8/01	1/1/01 - 2/7/01	2/1/01 - 3/7/01	3/1/01 - 4/6/01	4/1/01 - 5/7/01	5/1/01 - 6/7/01	6/1/01 - 7/31/01	
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